Applicants : Herman Jacobus Blok, Hendrik Sibolt Van Damme

Colin John Ingham and Maria Helena Hilhorst

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Remarks

Claims 1-24 were pending. By this amendment, applicants have amended Claims 1, 2, 4-16, 18-21, 23, 24, 26-29, 38, 40, 41, 43, 45, 47, 48 and 50 and cancelled Claims 30-37 and 52-54 in order to comply with U.S. patent practice, to correct minor typographical and grammatical errors, and to eliminate multiple dependencies to reduce the filing fees. The amendments to the claims are being made without prejudice or disclaimer to applicants' right to pursue these claims later in prosecution. The amendments to the claims do not introduce new matter. Accordingly, entry of the foregoing claim amendments is respectfully requested.

No fee is deemed necessary in connection with the filing of this Preliminary Amendment. If any fee is required, authorization is hereby given to charge any such fee to Deposit Account No. 01-1785.

Respectfully submitted,

AMSTER, ROTHSTEIN & EBENSTEIN LLP

Attorneys for Applicants

90 Park Avenue

New York, NY 10016

(212) 336-8000

Dated: New York, New York

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Craig J. Arnold

Registration No. 34,287